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THE VIENNA EXHIBITION IN CONNEXION WITH ART-INDUSTRY.

BY JACOB FALKE.*

GOLD AND SILVER WORK.

No branch of Art-industry is better and more richly represented in the Exhibition than that of the goldsmith and jeweller. We are perfectly enabled to appreciate the productions of our time, and to acquaint ourselves with the peculiarities of the different countries. For notwithstanding the levelling influence of modern education and fashion, there still exist remarkable diversities, which among Russian artists rise even into national characteristics.

This can hardly be said with respect to those articles of jewellery in which the stone itself claims precedence over the setting. Here we notice especially great varieties in the countries in which the several stones are indigenous, each making more abundant use of its own offspring. This is the case, for example, with the charming opal of which the Hungarian jeweller L. Goldschmidt exhibits a great number of artistic and remarkable specimens, and the same may be said of the Bohemian garnet. Russia has in a similar manner her own malachite, a semi-precious stone indeed, of which she makes plentiful use, though deficient in taste and fantasy.

In the Exhibition the diamond claims the highest rank, not only on account of the richness and magnificence of the specimens, but also for the manner in which it is treated. France, Austria and England vie with one another in ornaments of the most costly character, and Italy also, Twerembold in Turin, for example, shows some splendid specimens. In the English department, Hancock bears the palm above all others, in the magni-

ficent diamond parure which he has made for Lady Dudley; in the French, Rouvenat, Boucheron, Mellerio and Otterbourg; in the Austrian, Kobeck and Aegidi, Köchert, Emile Biedermann, Granichstädter, are the artists whose workmanship attracts universal admiration.

If we observe the works of all these jewellers from the artistic point of view, we can easily distinguish two different tendencies. In the one, the stones are set so closely together as to form some particular object, a rose, for example, or some other flower, or a bird, feather &c. This is the naturalistic tendency, and it has this disadvantage, that the sparkling effect of the stones entirely destroys the form they are intended to represent, so that the flower or bird is scarcely to be recognised. This is in every way the least advantageous style, but unfortunately it seems to be the one most generally adopted, especially by the French. The other tendency is towards a more artistic, more conventional design, and corresponding to it, a due distribution and arrangement of the stones, and is so much the more successful, and produces so much more favorable an effect, in proportion as it keeps in view the peculiar refraction of the rays of each stone. If from this point of view, we compare the different costly diadems of this Exhibition, we shall speedily arrive at the conclusion, that preference must be given to those in which the second principle comes out in greatest force. And those are the articles exhibited by Köchert of Vienna. Although the difference between these two tendencies is rather a personal one, still, as we have said, we can almost always distinguish national diversities, at least in their best and most striking works. Thus, the Italian goldwork is at present bent upon the imitation

* Continued from page 179 *ante*.
The Workshop. 1874.

of the antique and moreover shows its peculiar art in the application of cameos, mosaics and filigrees. Next to it in the utilisation of antique motives, are the Danish ornaments of Christesen in Copenhagen. The Russian goldwork is remarkable for an especially rich use of enamel, and that too in ornaments which again are peculiarly Russian. Norway is distinguished by its silver filigree. France remains faithful to the traditions of her Art-industry, embracing every kind of workmanship which she finds anywhere of importance, taking up and bringing into fashion the antique, imitating the oriental, working with coral and cameos like the Italians, and giving especial prominence to enamel. To these we must add the Swiss goldsmiths, who work for exportation and who bring us specimens of the Egyptian, Grecian, Assyrian, French, and even of American and other almost unknown styles. At a similar standpoint, but with a certain importance of its own, is the German goldwork, which appears to be concentrated in single towns, as in Hanau, Pforzheim, Gmund and Stuttgart, and is exhibited collectively. What Austria, and especially Vienna, brings forward in similar juxtaposition, is the offspring of the same genius, but inferior in importance and artistic value. It is in jewellery, not in goldwork, that Vienna shows her importance in this branch of art.

Considered exclusively as goldsmiths' workmanship, the Italian stands highest, and in the first rank of all, the works of Castellani in Rome. They are distinguished by the delicacy and perfect elaboration of their forms, which are exact imitations of the antique, partaking withal of its other excellencies, an extraordinary neatness of detail, a special appropriateness to the objects they are intended to decorate, and lastly a wonderful delicacy in the filigree which covers the surface like velvet, or surrounds and frames it with its threads. This perfection of goldwork, which has been attained by the imitation of the antique ornaments, has also been of advantage to the other Italian works in the same material, to the cameos and small mosaics in the Roman or Florentine style, which since then have had a much more ornamental and more perfect treatment.

The Italian goldwork has another excellence, which also is partly to be placed to the account of the imitation of the antique, namely the addition of small figures to the ornament, as was the case both in olden times, and especially also in the Renaissance. No material is better adapted for ornamental relief than wrought gold: modern times have quite neglected this technique so that figure ornament has fallen into disuse. The Italian goldsmiths have now taken it up again in many ways, but they stand almost alone in this respect. Among the French goldsmiths, Emilie Philippe alone, with his delicate, really artistic gold and silver works, deserves especial mention; he alone has introduced figures in relief among his ornaments. For the rest, there are only flowers and foliage, or conventional and often unmeaning ornaments, or relying for effect upon the sparkling of the stones and the glittering of the metal. Altogether, the French goldsmiths have taken up the antique motives

and make such an extensive use of them that they have brought them into fashion, but they are still only motives which, like all others, they utilise and appropriate in their own peculiar way.

There is a transition also into this ancient style, in the forms and ornaments of the German workmanship in the towns we have mentioned above, but not in that purity of style which we see in the Museums, or recognise in Castellani. Compared with their standpoint in 1867, they have, beyond all doubt, produced a good and refining effect, but in the very best specimens they are very far behind the original antiques or the Italian imitations of them. It is true that the generality of them are produced for a cheap market, but there are some articles among them which seem to have some pretensions without justifying them. Side by side with the antique motives there is still to be seen in the German goldworks that obsolete style of ornament, the imitation of horse-shoes, bolts, buckles and other absurdities, and as a third kind of ornament, there is the naturalistic, with its naturally designed flowers, leaves, tendrils and festoons, which certainly displays to us extraordinarily ornamented articles, but which nevertheless retains its own characteristics. These three tendencies go hand in hand, or intermingle so as to form the peculiarity, if it be one, of this German goldsmiths' art. The numerous firms have generally a speciality, but there are few who are distinguished above the rest. We may however name Bissinger of Hanau, and Mayer and Pleuer of Stuttgart.

One speciality which offers a contrast to the European style, is in the Indian ornaments, which, as they stand in the very first degree of excellence, we must not pass over. They consist generally of filigree and enamel, and sometimes of relief, with the application of figure subjects. The work is often of the greatest delicacy, in particular the transparent enamel is of such beauty, the colours so well harmonised, the design so charming, that our European goldsmiths might learn much from their teaching. We must not omit to notice as a special Indian peculiarity the articles from the Punjab, with their threads of gold in highly ornamental patterns.

In silverwork, which is now almost every where separated from the gold, all countries seem to vie with each other in the fabrication of elegant appointments for the table, and this department of the Exhibition would produce a highly brilliant effect, had not the great principle of the last Paris Exhibition, the arrangement by countries and productions, the Columbus egg of Exhibitions, been foolishly given up at Vienna. France, England, Russia, Germany, Austria, even Holland and Denmark have contributed a large number of table ornaments, and Spain has sent in some ecclesiastical objects of unusually large dimensions. In all that serves for the ordinary use of the table in houses of the higher class, that is, in candlesticks, jugs, teapots and the like, there reigns a certain fashion in form and decoration. They are almost all of the same stamp, and generally still under the influence of the rococo, with naturalistic ornamentation, some however of more delicate shape, others

with a leaning to the antique, as, for example, in the silver articles of Christesen of Copenhagen. The naturalistic tendency, which shapes vessels in the form of animals, as owls and bears, or supports glass vases by palms and oaks, the favorite style a few years ago for real and artificial silverwork, flourishes still in Germany, and nowhere more luxuriantly than in the exhibition of the silver articles of Koch and Bergfeld of Bremen. There are also some Swabian manufacturers, as Kott in Gmund and Bruckmann in Heilbronn who have produced some important specimens of this perverted tendency. Nor, in the Austrian manufactories of plated goods is this naturalism yet extinct, and to our surprise, we see that English manufacturers who stand so high as Elkington and Hancock contribute a vast number of such articles.

On the other hand, when we look to those silverworks which can lay claim to high artistic value, or which have been produced through particular circumstances or by special command, we find that mere fashion exerts less influence, and can easily distinguish the peculiarities of the country, or those which characterise the individual artist. Thus we must in a certain sense point out as national the more important productions of the most eminent Russian goldsmiths, Owtschinnikoff in Moscow, Sasikoff and Postnikoff in Petersburg, although their style is novel but intended to be national. These Russian goldsmiths borrow their forms and ornaments from wood-carvings, imitating the more clumsy wooden jugs and pitchers in silver gilt, and ornamenting them as well as other vessels, cups, saucers, teapots and silver mirror frames with the openwork ornaments of their wooden houses. As these are generally coloured they usually execute every ornament on their silverwork, and indeed very cleverly, in enamel, and this gives to the entire exhibition of the Russian goldsmithswork in contrast to that of other countries, a peculiar coloured aspect.

Directly in contrast to this, the English silver manufacture, the chief representatives of which, Elkington and Hancock we have already named, has divested itself of all national characteristics without having brought forward, in its efforts after reform in taste, any distinct style of its own. These English exhibitors, Elkington especially, have specimens of all styles from the Antique to the naturalistic. Consequently, we have side by side works of the most beautiful and the most unseemly character, the most charming and the most incongruous. Their antique vessels are for the most part stiff in form, their candelabra and epergnes in French rococo destitute of all charm, their cup-bearing palmtrees and ferns in the barest naturalism, while close to them are vases with figures in the renaissance style of the highest value. A considerable number of show pieces and *pièces d'occasion* are a proof of good workmanship, but are without any beauty or originality; on the other hand a table ornament, marked as "Helicon vase", designed by Morel Ladeuil and executed in silver and steel with rich damascening and beautiful figure ornaments, belongs to the very first rank in the whole Exhibition and is perhaps by far the finest specimen of its kind that has ever been produced.

Germany also is not distinguished generally by any peculiarity in her Art-industry, nor, as far as we have seen, is there any exception in her ordinary silverwork, though her more important productions, those of Berlin, Nuremberg and Munich have a character of their own, partly however due to the artists themselves. This is the case, for example, with a charming table ornament, consisting of a goblet and saucer, composed and modelled for Herr von Cramer-Klett, by Kreling, and executed in silver by Winter of Nuremberg, and with a smaller ornament by Wanderer, the work of the same artist. The great Berlin silversmiths, Sy and Wagner, Vollgold and Son exhibit a great number of magnificent works which they have had to execute as presents for, or in memory of the heroes of the late war. These have all one common fault, and the same remark applies to similar works by Christesen of Denmark and van Kempen of Holland, that they are not designed or executed as ornaments for the table or salon, but as works of statuary and monumental art. We may remark also that these Berlin specimens make more use than formerly of gilding, or at least call in its aid, and so make the first step from the purely plastic into the pictorial. The rest of the works in silver, the candelabra, vases, jugs &c., show a tendency to abandon the cold classicism which formerly characterised Berlin, and even a transition into the forms and ornaments of the renaissance.

This tendency to the renaissance is still more decidedly observable in the more important goldworks of Vienna, those of Klinkosch, Granichstädten, Meyer and others. In these the influence of the first and most celebrated artists is felt, who put forth their best energies for Art-industry, while in Berlin they rather withdraw from this branch. Next to the artists of the Austrian Museum, Storck, Teirich and König, we mention, as worthy of especial notice, a large number of designs by Hansen for the manufactory of Klinkosch, while in Meyer's compartment are table ornaments by Teirich, and designs by the statuary König in Granichstädten's. All these are distinguished from the most prominent of the Berlin works, in that they are intended and manufactured for real use as table-ornaments, flower vases, fruit stands, and candelabra. The splendid show made by Klinkosch is at once a proof and measure of the taste and luxury of the nobility of Austria. By the side of all these silver manufacturers, a very independent position is seen to be taken by Ratzersdorfer in Vienna who has contributed goblets, cups, clocks, caskets, vases, &c., in gold, silvergilt, crystal and semi-precious stones of the secondary order, with an extensive adoption of the translucent and painted enamel, similar to those which the goldsmiths of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries used to make for the cabinets of princes and amateurs. No other goldsmith throughout the whole world represents in the present day, in so eminent a manner the polychromy of their art.

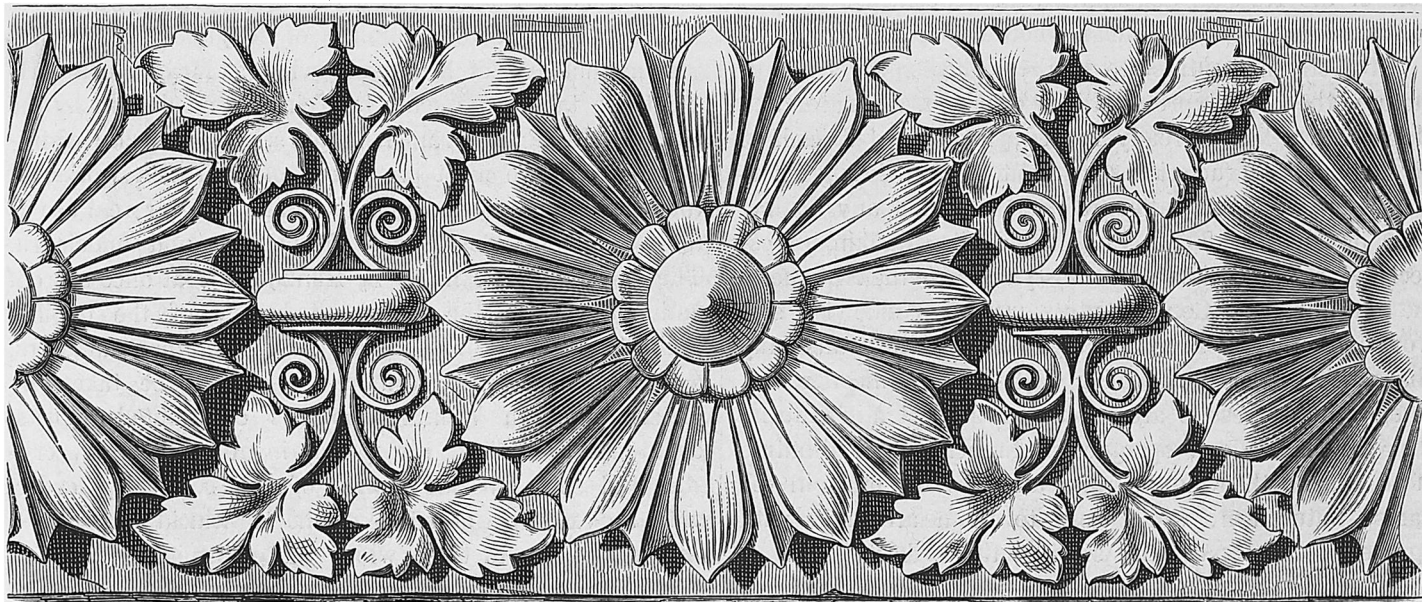
Christoffe is the only exhibitor who has contributed any thing peculiar in the Exhibition from France, but he is a host in himself, and represents his whole country

worthily, characteristically and comprehensively. His contributions embrace every kind of subject, from the smallest vessels, of tea and dinner services to the largest centre-pieces and vases. They are varied in style, for the Antique, especially the articles found at Hildesheim, the Chinese and Indian metal works, the renaissance and the French styles of the eighteenth century have all equally furnished motives. The technique is universal, for he shows us silver treated in every possible way, oxydised, mat, polished, engraved, damascened, and enamelled. All however is genuinely French in treatment without purity of style, and frequently arbitrarily heaped together in a confused melange. Thus there are some charming, sometimes truly perfect works, and others to which as capricious or overloaded we must deny any merit.

In one point, Christofle's silverworks display a happy novelty in the colour that is given to them. If we look

at those of any other country, we see that where they are not gilt, they are either polished and mat, or of a leaden hue and strongly oxydised, and in neither case are they agreeable to the eye. Christofle, on the contrary, shows us a number of delicate silverpieces of a warm and bright tint, which is still silvery and pleasant to the sight. All these objects have been first exposed to the process of gilding, and the gold is afterwards again rubbed off with the exception of a small remainder of the warm tint, while just a trace of it remains in the cavities. The process appears to us a very successful one, and peculiarly adapted to take from the silver its unpleasantly cold and hard appearance, while it leaves its delicate and clear tint. We regard this novelty as a decided step in advance in the goldsmith's art, correcting an imperfection and a disagreeable peculiarity, which is at present too common throughout Europe.

SPECIMENS OF ORNAMENTATION.



No. 1. Border Pattern, designed and modelled by M. A. Brasch in Berlin.